

# PLANNING FOR EQUITABLE TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO’S NORTH RIVER COMMUNITIES

DIJIA CHEN  
Program: Master of Urban Planning, 2018  
Capstone Advisor: Rob Olshansky  
Client: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

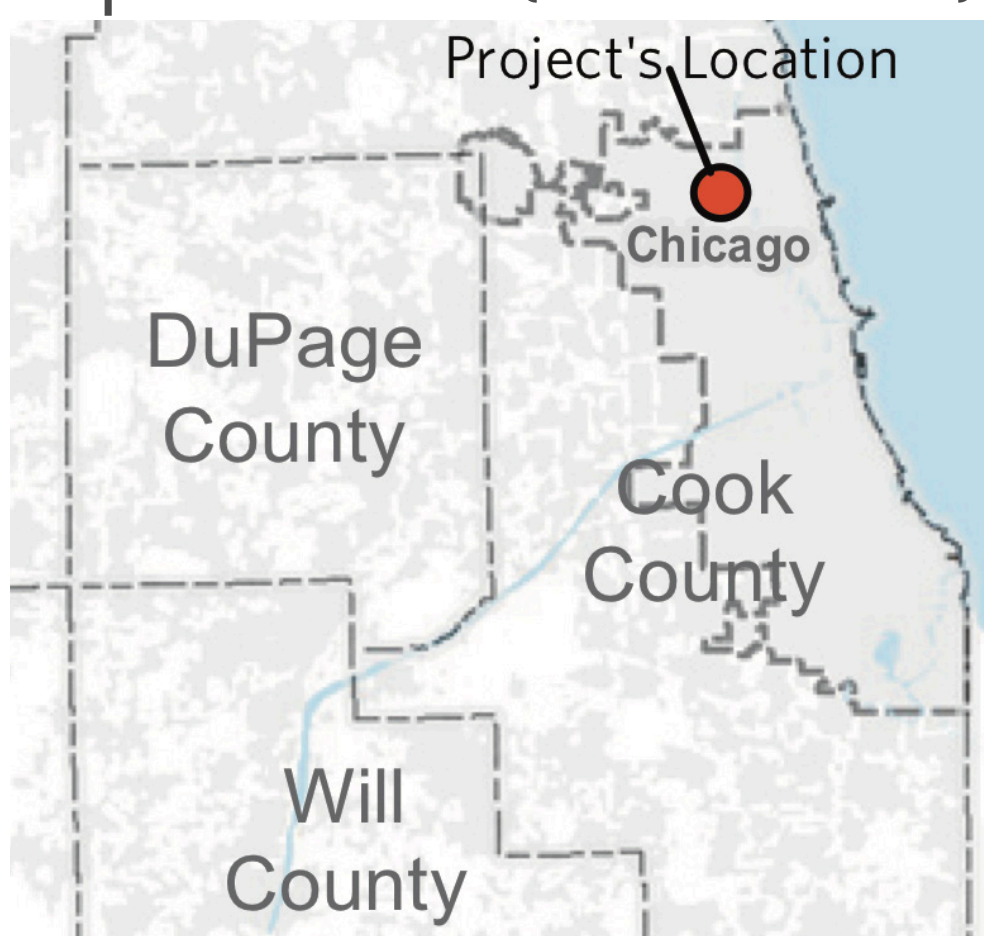
## VISION STATEMENT

The North River Communities will build on its robust transit assets and pursue equitable development policies to attract new investment, enliven retail corridors, expand affordable housing options, and enhance the diversity that is central to the community’s identity.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

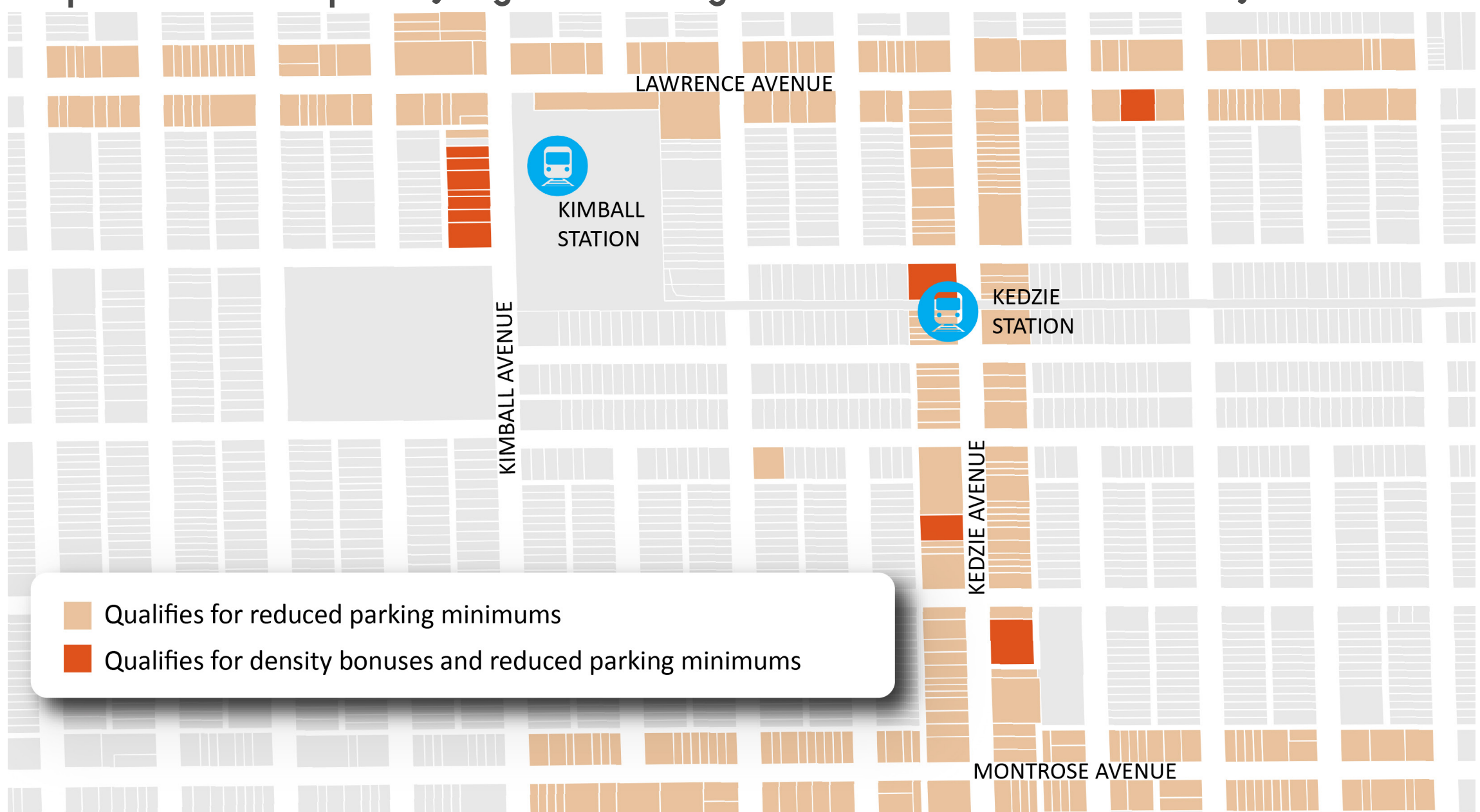
This capstone was developed as a part of a neighborhood plan for North River Communities in Chicago. Equitable transit-oriented development emerged as a key topic during the planning process, and recommendations were developed through extensive community engagement, research, and collaboration with professionals from multiple sectors.

Map 1: Location (Credit: CMAP)



## WHY PURSUE “EQUITABLE” TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT?

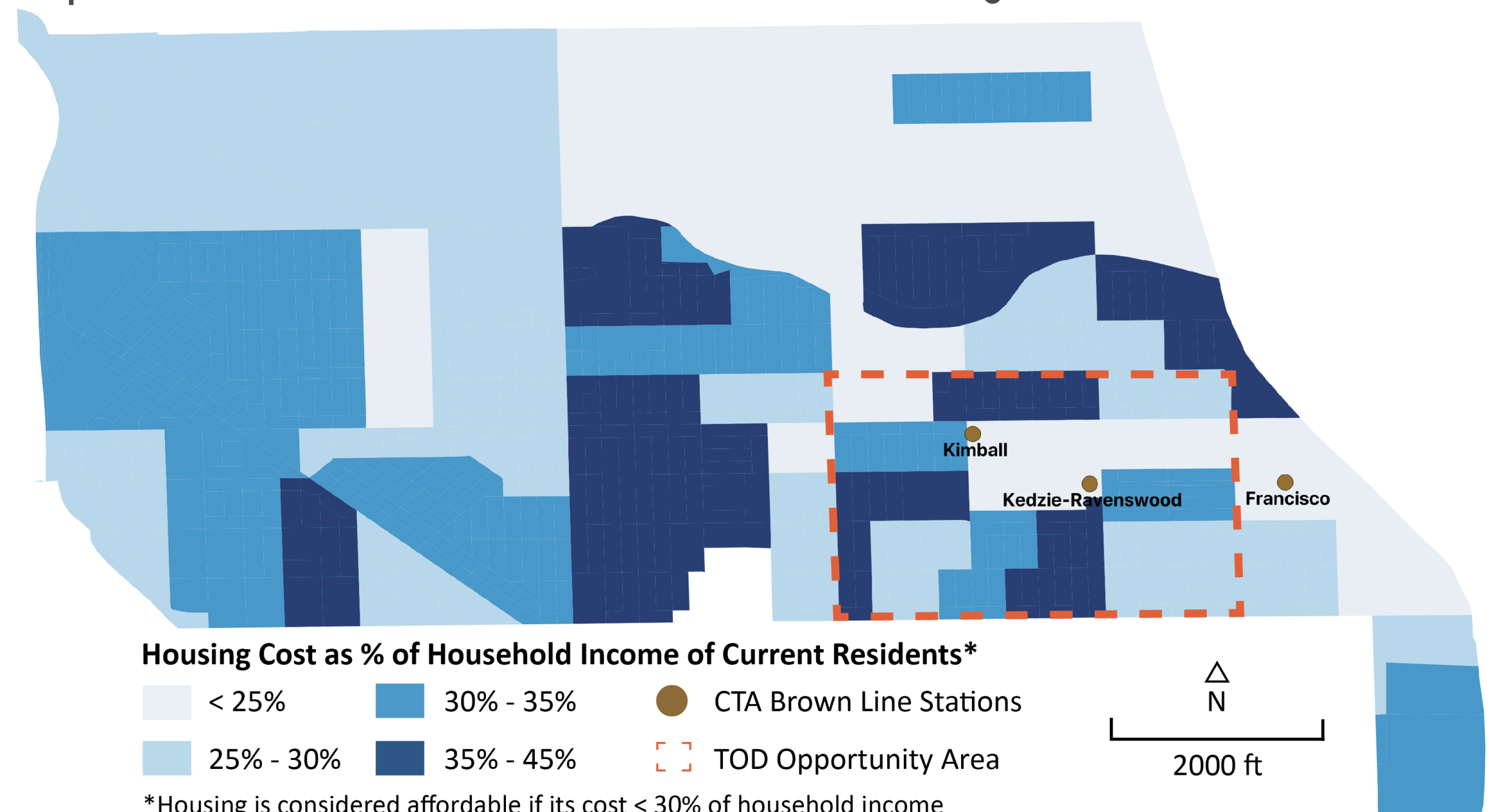
Map 2: Parcels qualifying for Chicago TOD Ordinance in Albany Park



Albany Park is a high-opportunity area for transit-oriented development:

- The area is home to three heavily utilized CTA Brown Line stations
- Many parcels in Albany Park already qualify for parking minimum reductions and density bonuses set out by the Chicago TOD Ordinance
- The vibrant, mixed-use environment along Lawrence and Kedzie commercial corridors make a strong foundation for TOD
- Despite these assets, little development has occurred in recent years

Map 3: North River Communities Resident Housing Cost Burden

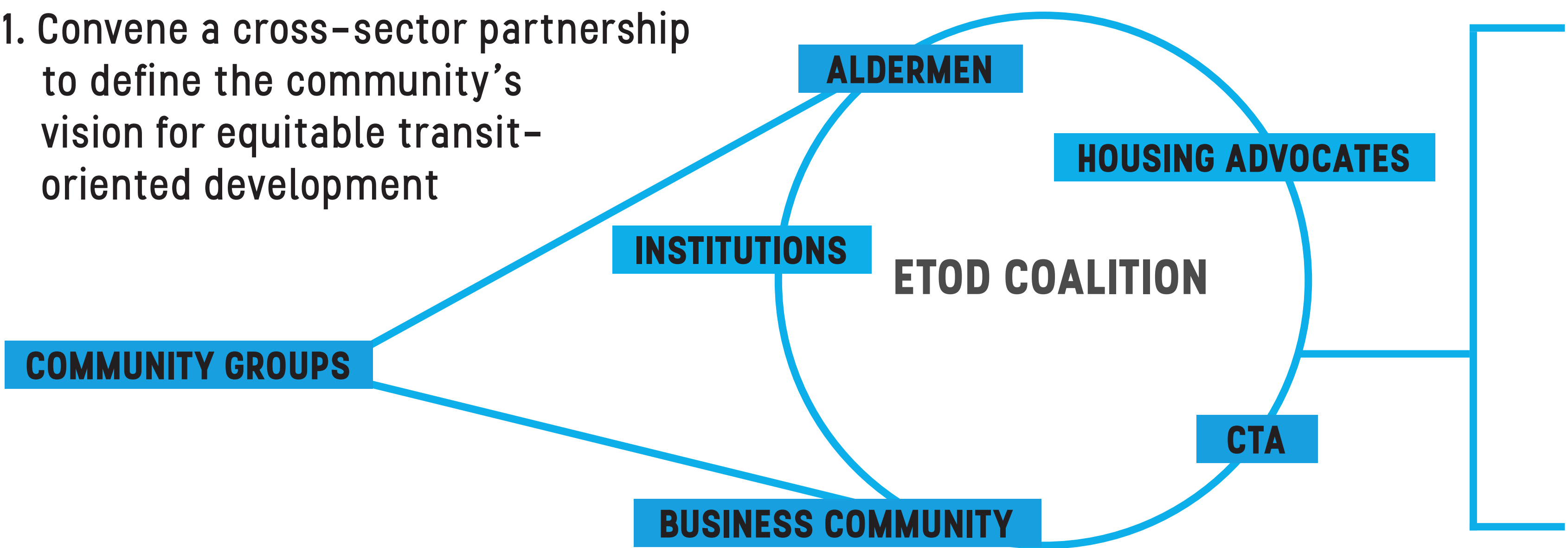


Preserving community diversity and housing affordability are key priorities for residents:

- Albany Park is one of the most ethnically diverse community areas in Chicago
- Unique local business culture driven by shops and restaurants owned by immigrant families catering to diverse needs
- A variety of affordable housing options available for all income levels, but prices have been rising
- Many existing residents, particularly lower income renters living near CTA stations, are cost burdened by housing

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Convene a cross-sector partnership to define the community’s vision for equitable transit-oriented development



- Advocate for requirement that developers provide affordable units on-site instead of paying a fee in-lieu
- Coordinate with CTA to pursue joint development that incorporates affordable housing

### GUIDANCE & ADVOCACY:

- AFFORDABILITY REQUIREMENTS
- DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
- CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION
- ZONING CHANGES
- DESIGN GUIDELINES
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Encourage developers to utilize incentives to make inclusion of affordable housing more financially feasible
- Explore whether a Community Benefits Agreement would help build community support for future development

2. Establish and communicate the community’s goals for the form and design of new TOD

- Use the CTA Brown Line core capacity and land use study as a basis for design guidelines
- Consider advocating for changes to underlying zoning to expand TOD bonuses

3. Attract active uses for ground-floor spaces

- Apply best practices in the design of ground-floor spaces
- Incorporate design guidelines that allow flexible spaces
- Work with community to identify desirable community spaces

4. Promote active transportation and proactively address parking implications

- Promote active transportation and shared mobility
- Understand current parking conditions
- Better manage existing parking supply